PLANK 2
Hypertension Guideline Used and Adherence Monitored

Each organization will adopt and deploy a process or algorithm to guide therapy in accordance with evidence-based guidelines. The JNC 7 and ADA goal for patients with diabetes and chronic kidney disease (<130/80) should be included.

What Are Clinical Practice Guidelines?

"Clinical practice guidelines are systematically developed statements to assist practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances" (Institute of Medicine, 1990). The guidelines contain recommendations that are based on evidence from a rigorous systematic review and synthesis of the published medical literature. Guidelines help clinicians and patients make appropriate decisions about health care, by:

- Describing a range of generally accepted approaches for the diagnosis, management, or prevention of specific diseases or conditions; and
- Defining practices that meet the needs of most patients in most circumstances.

The recommendations are not fixed protocols that must be followed. For individual patients, the judgment of responsible clinicians remains paramount. Clinicians and patients need to develop individualized treatment plans, tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the patient.

Tips for Adopting a Clinical Practice Guideline

- Many medical groups or healthcare systems create a Guidelines Committee to evaluate and make recommendations for the organization.
- Guidelines Committees are usually multidisciplinary and may form expert workgroups around specific topics or guidelines.
- Buy-in by physicians and other practitioners is essential, which means they must be actively engaged in guideline development and review.
- Guidelines may become obsolete as new evidence emerges, so a systematic process for periodic review is required.
- National guidelines are often quite long and detailed; many organizations have created practical summaries that are brief, actionable, and written in "plain English."

Adoption Is Not Enough

- Train physicians and other practitioners on guideline use.
- Clinical decision support in an EHR is a systematic way to incorporate guidelines into workflow, although it must be implemented judiciously to avoid "alert fatigue."
- Monitor adherence or reasons for lack of adherence to the guideline. Creating a feedback loop will help the organization understand the effectiveness of guideline training and possible needs to revise the guidelines.
- Enable and promote comparative data sharing among physicians and practitioners. To change practice culture, beliefs, and habits, data collection and data sharing are essential.

Supporting Literature and Resources

1. JNC 7: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/hypertension/

Full version of The Seventh Report of the Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure. Also includes physician reference card, slide shows, and free patient education materials for download

2. American Society of Hypertension list of guidelines:

www.ash-us.org/About-Hypertension/Hypertension-Guidelines.aspx

List of eight hypertension guidelines from US, European, and international societies.

3. Clinical Decision Support resources:

www.himss.org/ASP/topics_clinicalDecision.asp

Clinical decision support toolkit, case studies, and webinars, developed by HIMSS

Suggested AMGA Case Study

Billings Clinic: Creating Best Practices in Managing Hypertension

www.amga.org/Research/Research/Hypertension/Symposium/billings.pdf